



JAPAN HOUSE

SÃO PAULO

LONDON

LOS ANGELES

JAPAN HOUSE Activity Report

March 2019

Mind-blowing encounters with Japan across the globe

JAPAN HOUSE is a project which aims to nurture a deeper understanding and appreciation of Japan in the international community, by creating hubs from which to showcase and communicate Japan as a country of countless charms, able to enrich the rest of the world. These hubs, located in major global cities, are designed to function as platforms for people with passion and with talent who have been inspired to use JAPAN HOUSE to articulate, express, and reveal their experiences and interpretations of Japan.

JAPAN HOUSE operates three such hubs, in London, Los Angeles, and Sao Paolo. Each hub features an exhibition space, a retail space, restaurant, library, online resources, cafe and multi-purpose event venue. The project merges together these functions, and the activities they enable, to introduce a variety of themes, in detail and with substance: Japanese tradition as future assets, the wave of popular culture, the power of advanced technology, and the diverse appeal of Japanese food. Activities are designed to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, including those with little previous interest in Japan.

All the people involved in this project are motivated by a desire to keep examining, sincerely and flexibly, the same question “What is Japan?”. This is key to enable people to realize how little they know about Japan and then to open their eyes to Japan. The project also aims to distinguish itself clearly from other cultural activities, many of which have been defined by stereotypes and faux representations of Japan.

The project endeavors to present all aspects of Japanese cultures today, from high culture to subculture, to cutting-edge technology and beyond. Japan’s assets are its unparalleled and unique culture, technology, nature, architecture, cuisine, and design. These fascinating aspects of Japan unfolded by the project inspire people to form and nurture a deep and shared appreciation.

High culture



Subculture



Technology

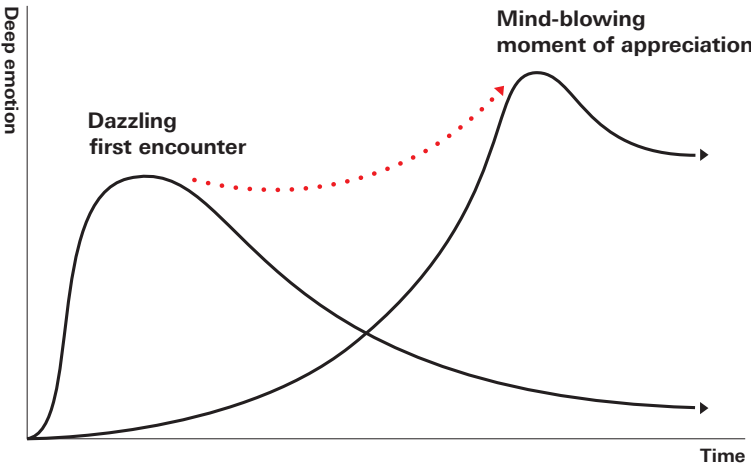


10 Principles

The project is developed in a concerted effort between each hub offering a standing venue to accommodate richly curated contents and Japanese exhibitors aspiring to present their ideas and works at these three locations. Under the following principles set out by the Chief Creative Director, the three hubs act in cooperation to engage in the most fulfilling activities.

The profound realization and silent astonishment of “how little we knew about Japan”

A simplistic understanding and a dazzling first encounter are not what the project tries to highlight. The Japanese people of today and people across the world are equally amazed to experience the essence of Japanese culture. The project focuses on immersing people in a much deeper spirit of Japan, even if it is a time-consuming process.



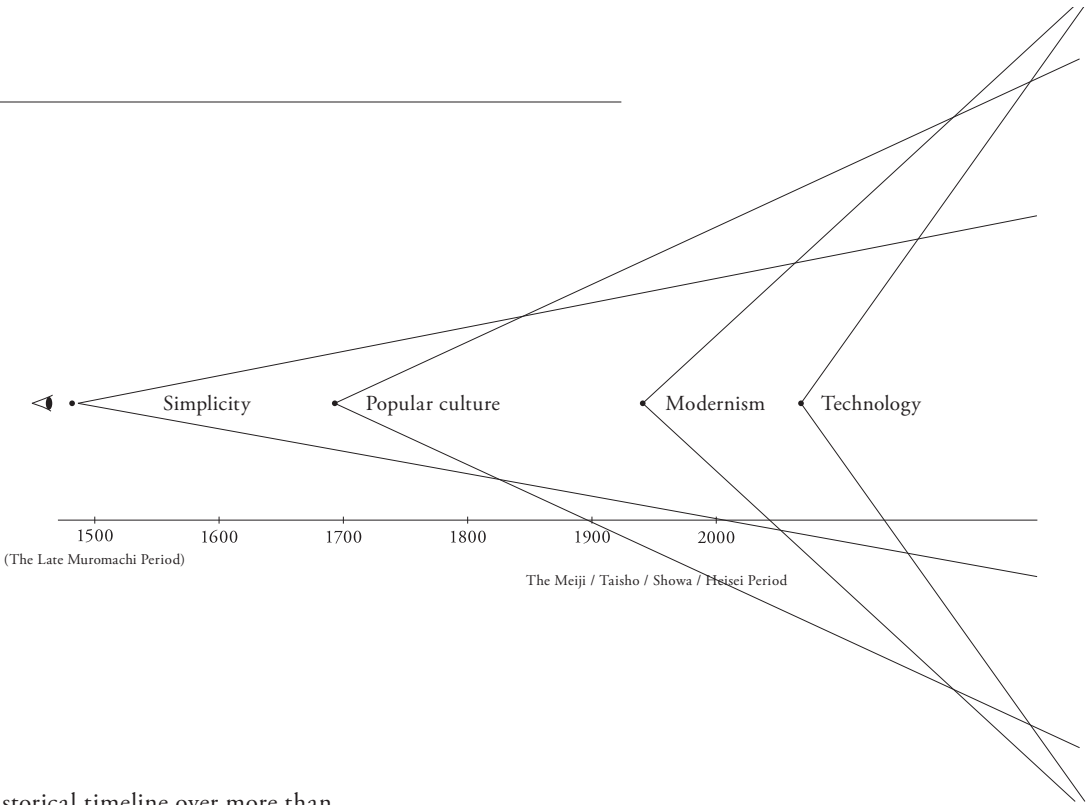
1

Present the Japanese aesthetic in a proud and precise manner, simultaneously capturing the old and the new.

Precision, delicacy, subtlety, and simplicity are the main themes. The unique identity of Japan is based on an aesthetic sense nurtured in a land that has existed as an independent country for more than a thousand years.

Blending this distinctive aesthetic with modern Japanese culture and cutting-edge technology, JAPAN HOUSE serves a mission to present and communicate the country’s forward-looking potential that could enrich the rest of the world. All people involved in the project must stay engaged in learning and exploring Japan.

The unceasing quest in search of an answer to the question “What is Japan?” drives the project. Tracing back to the past from the present, the project looks ahead to the future of Japan both locally and globally over the next 50 years.



Drawing from a historical timeline over more than a thousand years, the project envisions the future of Japan. It strives to understand Japanese tradition and culture as future-relevant assets. At the same time, these assets are hybridized with Japan’s leading-edge technologies, which embodies its functional presence on the global scene.

2

Provide a space that intuitively conveys the essence of Japanese culture and excites the viewers.

What is needed to make global opinion leaders appreciate the fascinating essence of Japan is their immediate exposure to spaces exemplifying the Japanese aesthetic. Japan's top-notch architects join the project to design such spaces capable of inspiring feelings of affinity for and interest in Japan.



3

Furnish user-friendly gallery spaces as perfect touring destinations for exhibition contents sourced from Japan.

JAPAN HOUSE offers gallery space for exhibitions throughout the year, half of which accommodate touring exhibitions curated in Japan. These touring exhibitions visit each hub location at given intervals. The project develops an enabling arrangement and venue that cater to dedicated creators and talents wishing to present their works abroad.



4

Ensure not to compromise on the quality of what is on display or sale, eliminating anything that blurs authentic interpretation of Japan.

The project does not rely on subculture to entice visitors. It also avoids stereotyped representations of Japan. While keen to the essence of the Japanese culture, JAPAN HOUSE operates with the idea of composing the contemporary reality. Cultural diversity and tradition are presented equally with ingenuity to edit and narrate each story.



5

Food and drink services that allow visitors to experience the depth of Japanese food culture through the mastery of techniques, authentic settings, and culinary customs and etiquette.

Serving *washoku* is demanding. Creating an authentic setting is a collective endeavor from ensuring the proper technique of cooks, the supply and preservation of seasonal ingredients and high-quality *sake*, genuine Japanese atmosphere including tableware and garnish of fresh flower, to proper hospitality when serving guests. Restaurant services offered at JAPAN HOUSE strive to maintain an impeccable standard for all these elements.

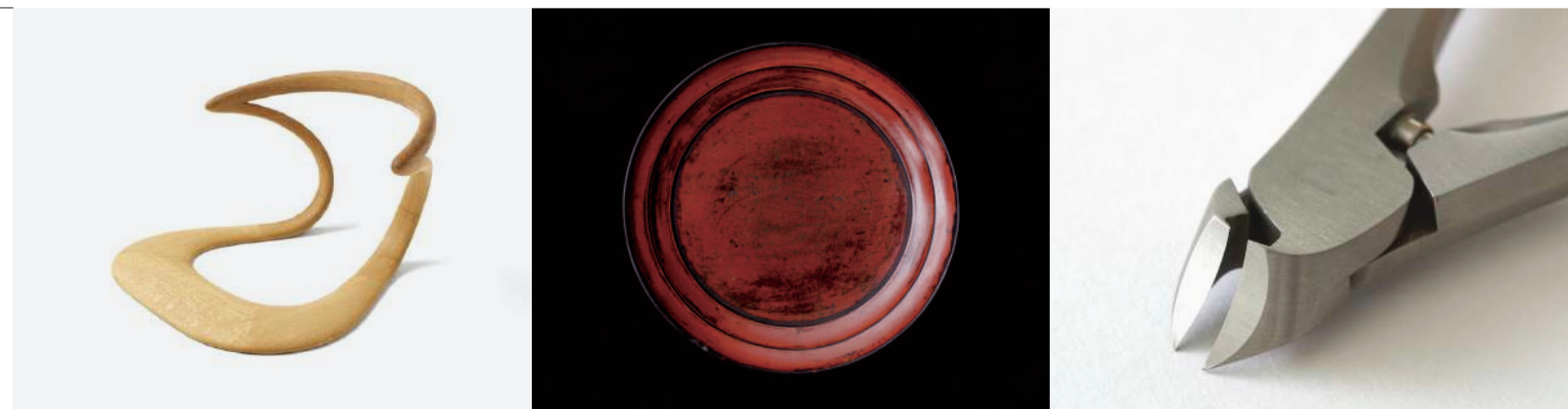


Photo: Noboru Aoki, SHINCHO-SHA

6

Offer a credible shop where people feel like they can “purchase a bit of Japanese culture”.

The shop strives to offer curated collections of the finest products exemplifying Japanese *monozukuri* or craftsmanship. The product lineup includes the furnishings and tableware used in the restaurant, bar, cafe, gallery and other corners in JAPAN HOUSE. Throughout the facility and the services provided there, visitors can enjoy compelling goods, which should help entice potential shoppers.



7

Carefully select books on Japanese culture and arts and keep sufficient items in stock.

A space with ample collections of books that are carefully selected creates an atmosphere of intellectual comfort. Books of the curators' choice are placed so that they are easily accessible from the shop, gallery, and cafe area to increase comfort while stimulating the creative curiosity of visitors.



Photo: Kenichi Higuchi

8

Provide a small and adjustable theater space to present films, workshops and performances.

Besides an exhibition space and a retail floor, a dedicated venue is provided to present the best of Japanese culture, i.e. *noh* and theater plays, dance performances, films and animated cartoons, high-tech products, *ikebana* (Japanese flower arrangement) and *bonsai* (potted trees) displays, and tea ceremonies. It is not just about providing a space where these traditional practices are replicated, but to present the best of Japanese culture to the future in a global context.



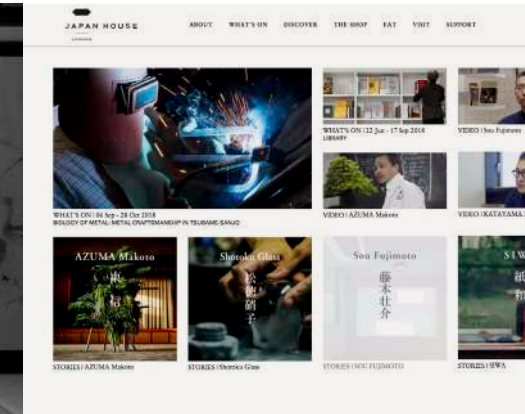
9

Ensure thorough website management to distribute quality contents.

Rather than just being visually appealing, the website focuses on delivering engaging content edited with careful attention to detail in a precise, subtle, and simple manner.

Multi-media spaces at the three hubs allow visitors to enjoy quality web contents sourced from Japan on *onsen* (hot spring bath), *ryokan* (Japanese-style inns) and hotels, food, *sake*, and more.

The underlying pillars of website management at JAPAN HOUSE are short update intervals, accuracy and to provide rewarding content to the readers, rather than high-flown narratives.



10

Assign dedicated PR staff to ensure an accurate and continuous stream of information

Outreach and publicity work is crucial.

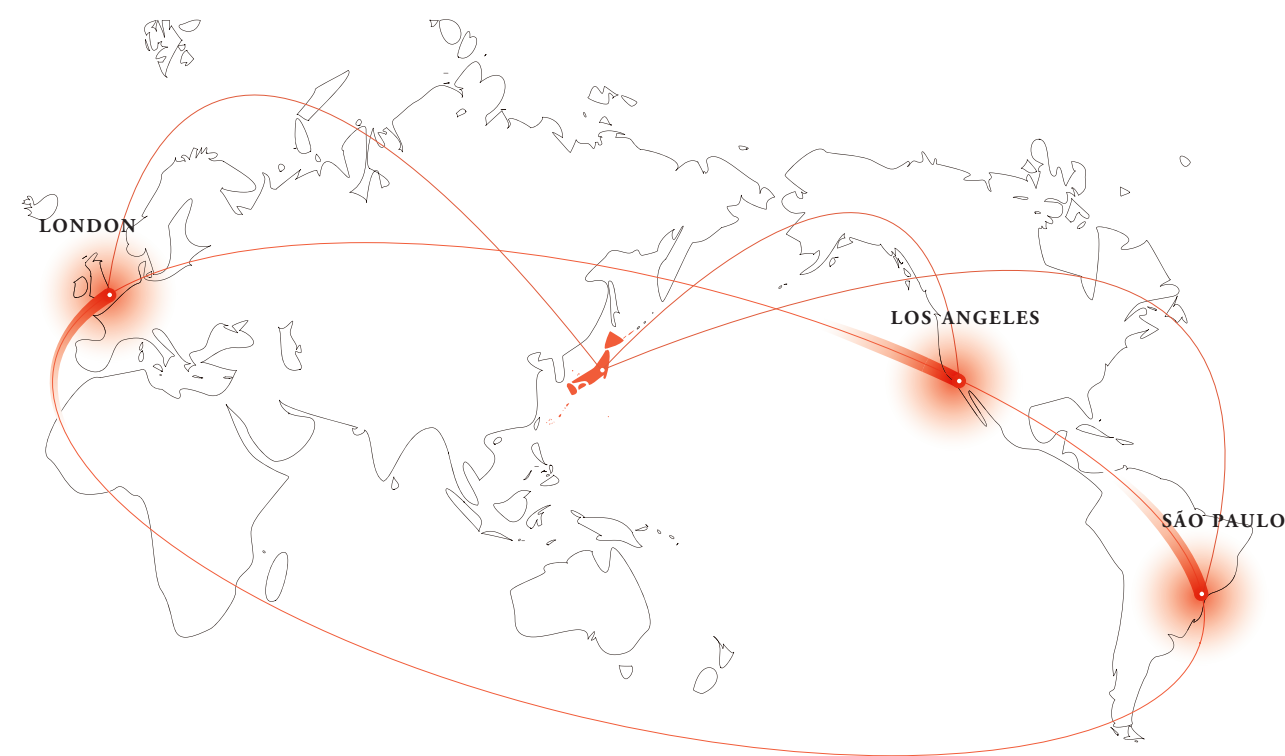
Alongside website management, PR staff continuously distribute to-the-point information to the media on gallery exhibitions, events, seminars, workshops, food services, and retail offers.



The invaluable mission of touring exhibitions

Every year, touring exhibitions for the three JAPAN HOUSE hubs are selected in an open contest. Carefully curated in Japan, a series of vibrant and impactful exhibitions depart for the hubs. This strategy avoids a post-opening slowdown, and creates a pulsating wave moving through the project by a simultaneous rotation of experiences, objects, and people.

The three cities form spontaneous collaborations in the course of hosting the touring exhibitions, which enable them to share the displays planned and organized at each hub.



Exhibitions travel around the world with experiences, objects, and people. Exhibitions are invited from a variety of fields and are selected by museum directors and curators. The hubs also exchange locally-planned and organized exhibitions with one another. This creates a vibrant and collaborative connection among Japan and the three hubs.

Phase 1



Sou Fujimoto: FUTURES OF THE FUTURE



TAKEO PAPER SHOW SUBTLE —Delicate or Infinitesimal



Prototyping in Tokyo

Phase 2



This is MANGA — the Art of NAOKI URASAWA —

© Naoki URASAWA / Studio Nuts

Sou Fujimoto:
FUTURES OF THE FUTURE

Exhibitor:
TOTO Gallery·MA

Exhibition of works directed by the architect Sou Fujimoto, which was originally hosted in TOTO Gallery·MA. Sou Fujimoto has received worldwide attention for his unique presentation of imaginative architecture using daily utensils and pieces of every-day materials, and more recent architectural model works. This exhibition of his works at Japan House unveiled the originality of contemporary Japanese architecture.

Tour Timetable	Touring City	Number of Visitors (person)
November 21, 2017— March 4, 2018	São Paulo	171,022
June 22 — August 5, 2018	London	88,000
October 27, 2018 — January 6, 2019	Los Angeles	37,170
		Total 296,192

London June 22 — August 5, 2018

Photo: Lee Mawdsley



São Paulo November 21, 2017—March 4, 2018



Los Angeles October 27, 2018—January 6, 2019



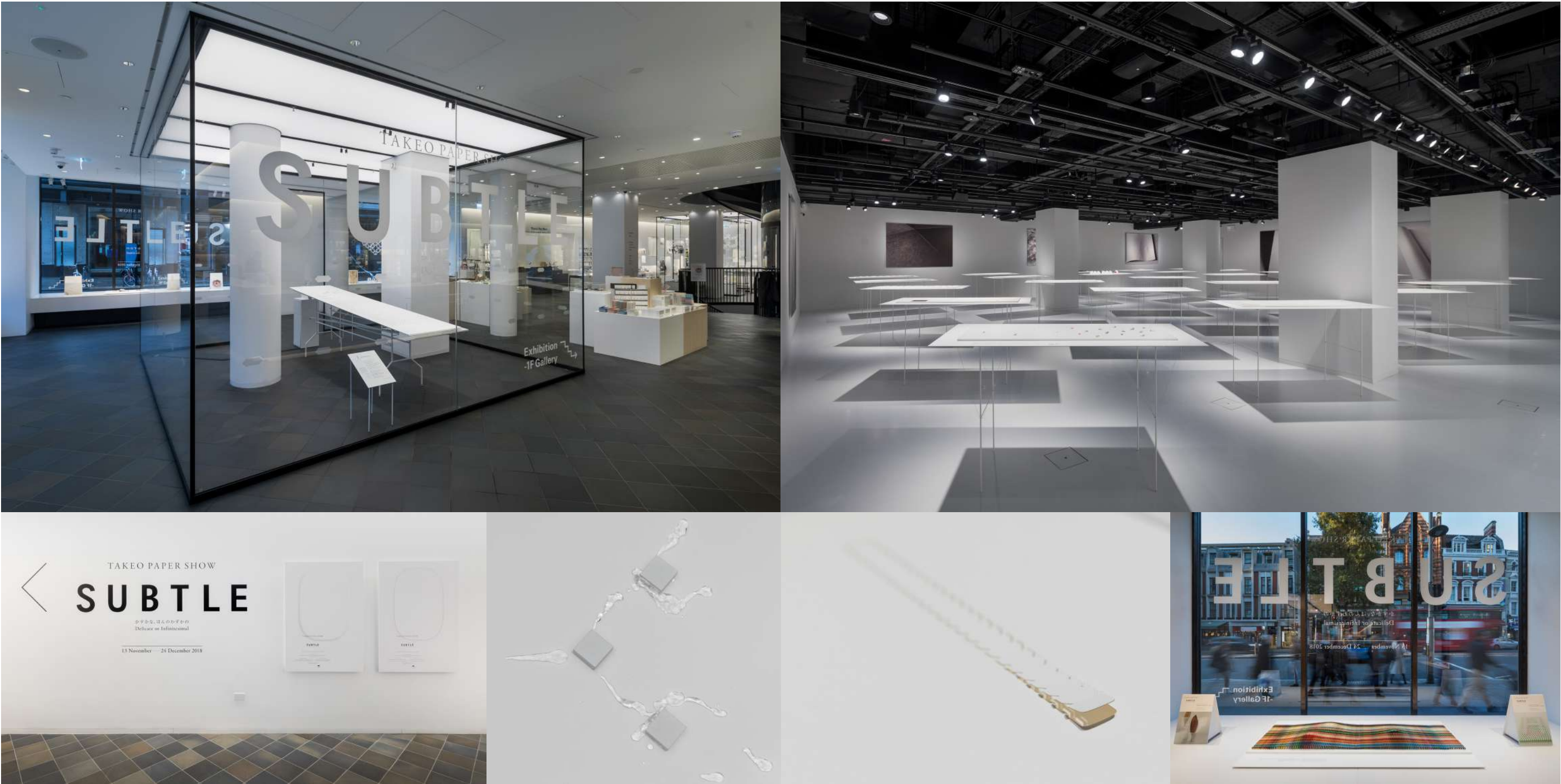
TAKEO PAPER SHOW SUBTLE
——Delicate or Infinitesimal

Exhibitor:
TAKEO Co., Ltd.

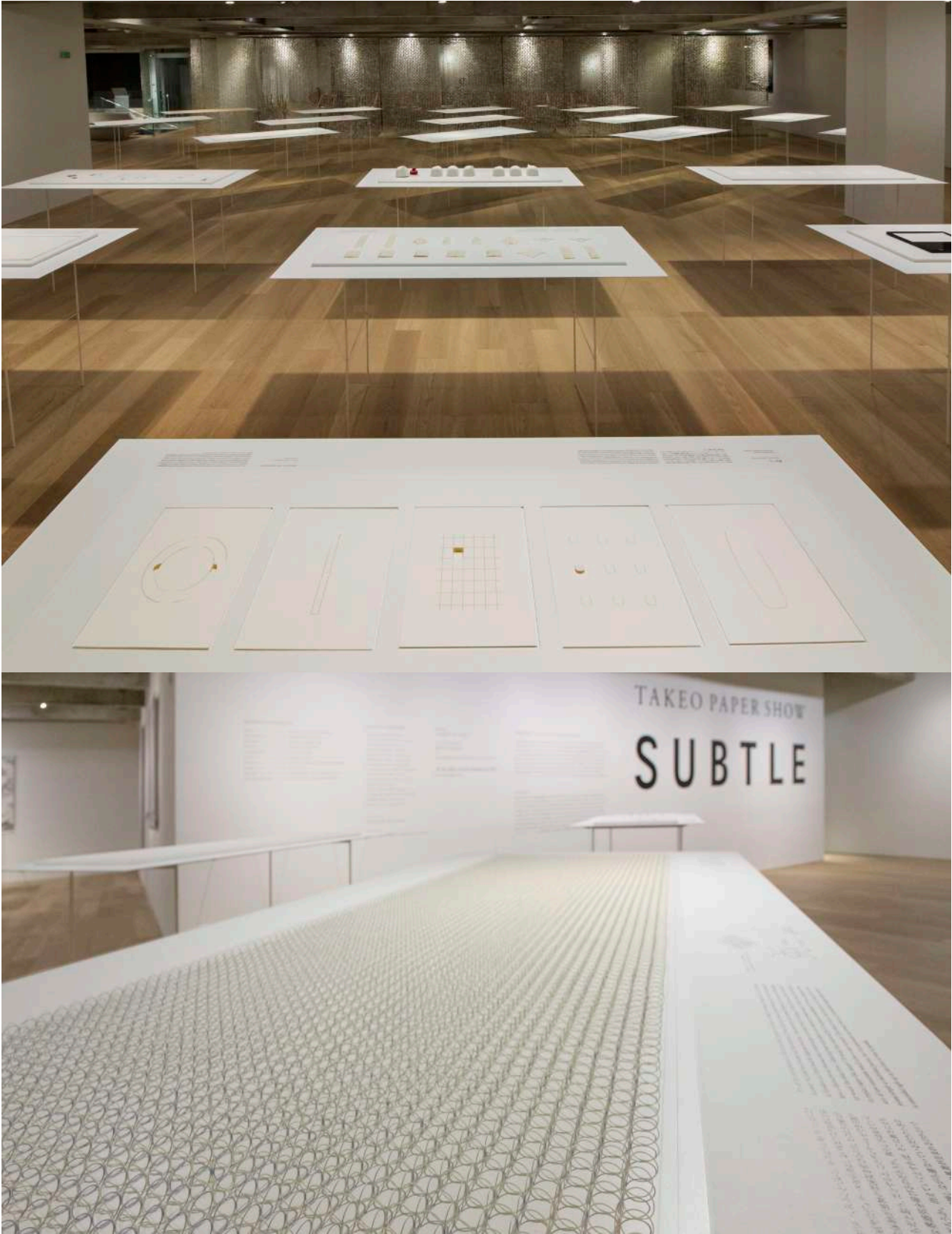
The subtitle is “Delicate or Infinitesimal”. The SUBTLE exhibition organized by the specialty paper company TAKEO showcased the fascinating essence of paper in innovative creations and adequately presented the delicate Japanese sensibility and subtlety. The exhibition has succeeded in evoking a silent sense of awe in visitors around the world.

Tour Timetable	Touring City	Number of Visitors (person)
July 29 — September 10, 2017	São Paulo	101,453
April 13 — May 23, 2018	Los Angeles	16,897
November 13 — December 24, 2018	London	62,000
		Total 180,350

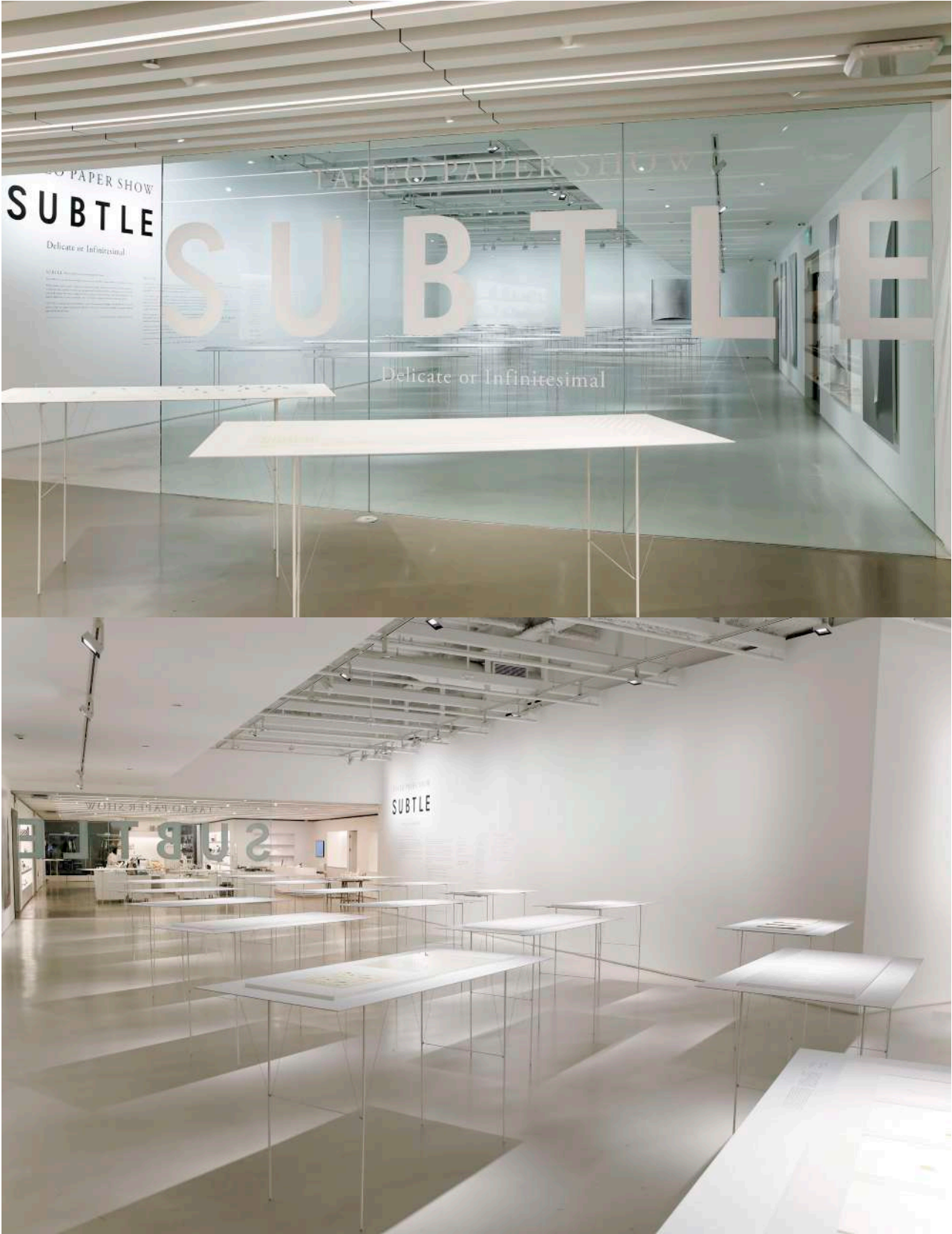
London November 13 — December 24, 2018



São Paulo July 29 — September 10, 2017



Los Angeles April 13 — May 23, 2018



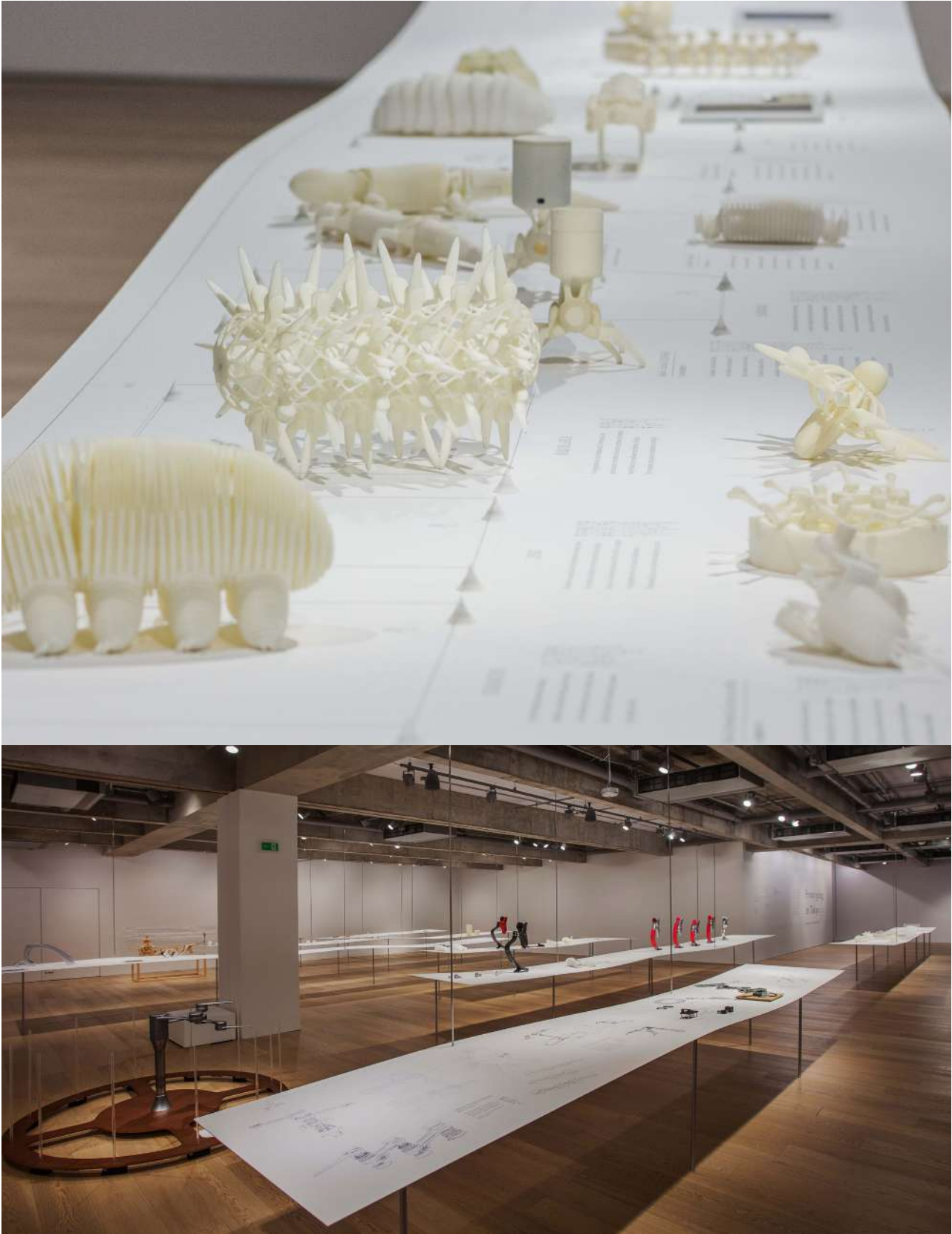
The exhibition presented by Professor Shunji Yamanaka of the University of Tokyo, who engages in prototyping that envisions the future of cutting-edge technology. His exhibits included a project exploring the motions and behaviors of “bio-likeness robots” and prosthetic legs developed by his laboratory.

Tour Timetable	Touring City	Number of Visitors (person)
March 27 — May 20, 2018	São Paulo	94,102
August 17 — October 10, 2018	Los Angeles	47,855
January 16 — March 17, 2019	London	—

London January 16 — March 17, 2019



São Paulo March 27 — May 20, 2018



Los Angeles August 17 — October 10, 2018



This is MANGA
—the Art of NAOKI URASAWA—

Exhibitor:
The Yomiuri Shimbun

Continually pushing the limits of the manga medium, Naoki Urasawa creates works that are both introspective and philosophical with his innovative compositional techniques and versatile drawing prowess. The exhibition presents the artist's boundless psyche through more than 400 original drawings and storyboards on display.

Tour Timetable	Touring City	Number of Visitors (person)
January 23 — March 28, 2019	Los Angeles	On display
June 5 — July 28, 2019	London	—
October 29, 2019 — January 5, 2020	São Paulo	—

Los Angeles January 23 — March 28, 2019

© Naoki URASAWA / Studio Nuts

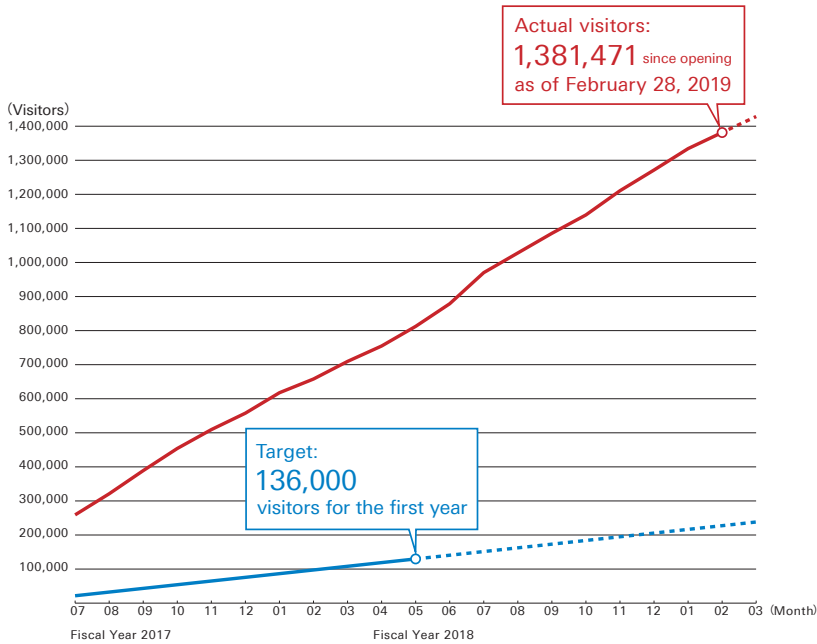


JAPAN HOUSE

Number of visitors

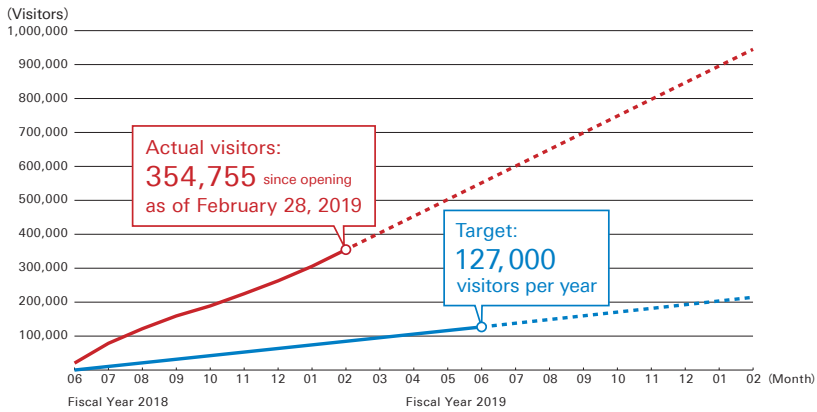
São Paulo
Opened: April 2017

JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo, which was met with a staggering response at its opening, has received far more visitors than expected and retains an unflagging popularity nearing the completion of the its second year of its operation.



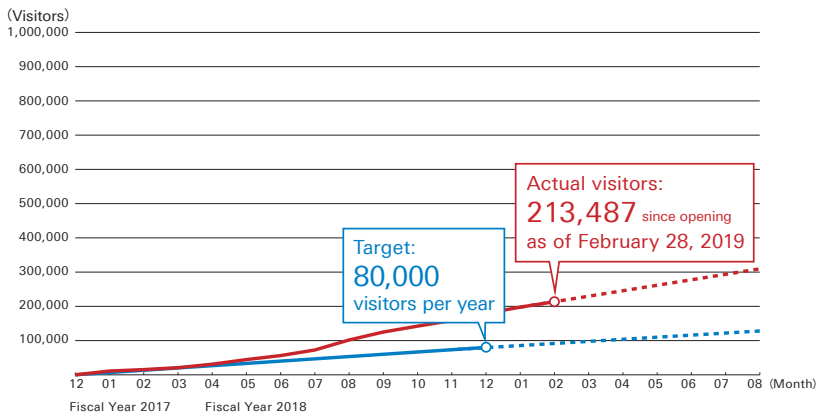
London
Opened: June 2018

JAPAN HOUSE London was showered with attention just as its counterpart in São Paulo. The annual target for the number of visitors was achieved within the first two months of operation.



Los Angeles
Opened: December 2017

The number of visitors is on an increasing trend, with the annual target already achieved. JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles opts not to operate an ordinary restaurant. It offers an innovative dining room which is made available for Japanese food businesses and organizations to roll out their service.



São Paulo

New showplace on Paulista Avenue

A Brazilian-style building that fronts on Paulista Avenue, the main street of the city. The Japanese architect Kengo Kuma designed the eye-catching facade of timberwork with Japanese cypress. The interior features a unique Japanese-style space partitioned with metal mesh coated by *washi* (Japanese paper). This fusion between Japanese and Brazilian architectural styles offers a hospitable venue for the locals, expressing close cultural ties between the two countries.

It consists of three floors hosting exhibitions, seminars, and workshops, delivering a wide variety of contents related to technology, science, cuisine, fashion, design, art and more. The inaugural exhibition, “BAMBU: History of Japan,” featured bamboo. The facility includes shops and a café both offering high-quality products, as well as a library area that also draws visitors’ attention.

Celebrating the opening, a spectacular inauguration ceremony was held on April 30, 2017, followed by an admission-free public concert on May 7, inviting Ryuichi Sakamoto, Jun Miyake, and Brazilian musicians Jaques and Paula Morelenbaum. Also, directed by the Japanese flower artist Makoto Azuma, a fleet of flower messengers on 30 bicycles pedaled around popular spots in the city. They heralded the opening of JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo, adding a colorful touch to the city.

Guests at the inauguration ceremony included the-then President Michel Temer and key government officials from Japan, making the event a satisfying celebration. At the public opening, a queue of waiting visitors formed outside the venue. It was a huge success with a turnout of more than 7,500 people. JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo has been bustling with a series of attractive events, receiving more than one million visitors after the inauguration. This is more than seven times the initial target for annual visitors.

JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo
Honorary President: Rubens Ricupero
President: Marcelo Araujo
Vice President: Carlos Augusto Roza
Cultural Director: Natasha Barzaghi Greenen

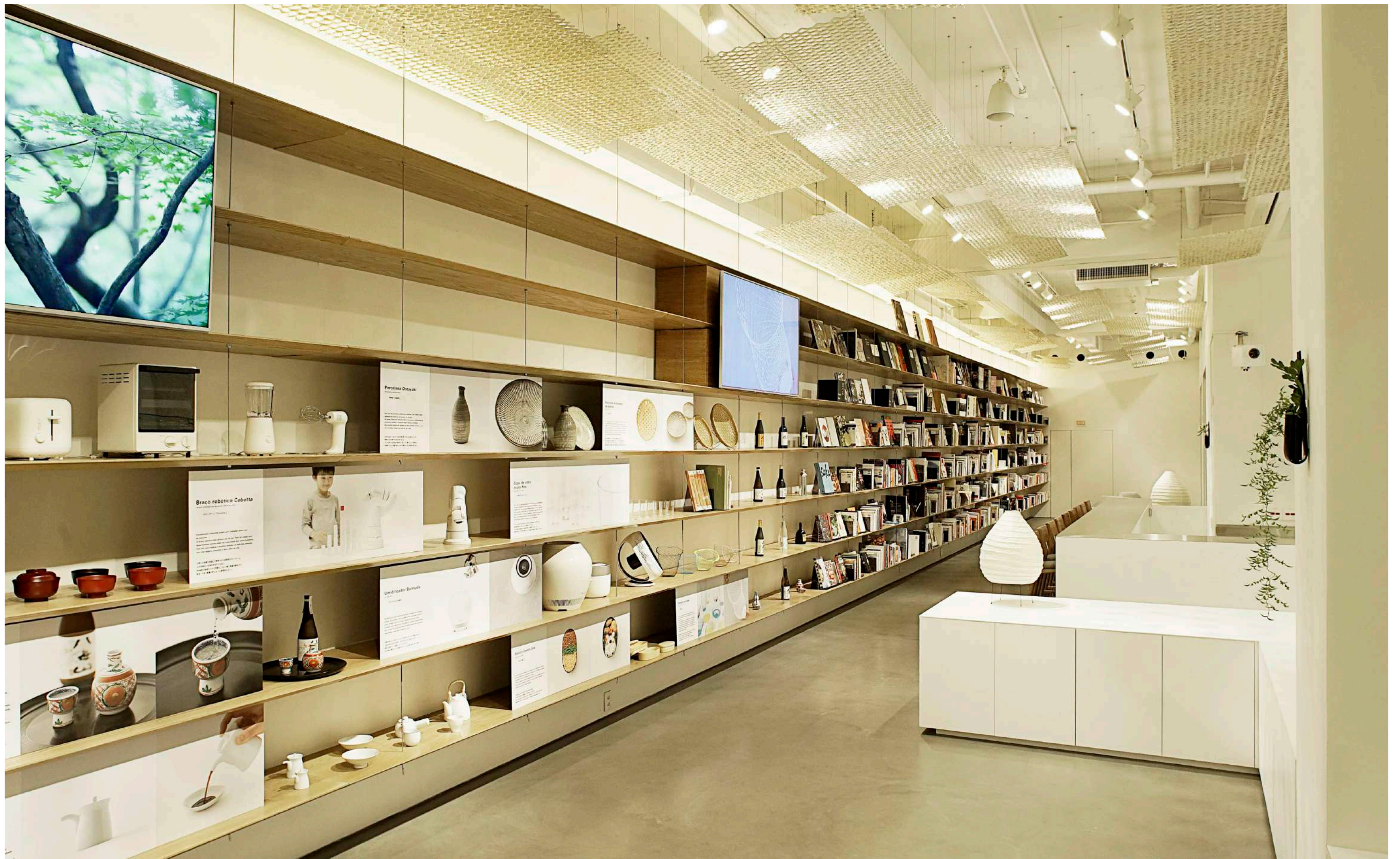


Exhibition “BAMBU” on display (above)
High-tech products and traditional craftworks were displayed in the same space with simple descriptions.



The unique facade of the building is a latticed assemblage (*jigokukumi*) of cypress slats, catching the eyes of passers-by on the avenue. It was assembled by shrine and temple carpenters sent from Japan.

Photo: Rogerio Cassimiro





Bamboo-made daily tools (above) A carefully curated collection of books on travel, cuisine, architecture, design, and more (middle) Partition made of metal mesh coated by *washi* (Japanese paper) (below)



Inauguration ceremony in the presence of the-then President Michel Temer and the Deputy Prime Minister of Japan Taro Aso (above)
Photo: Marcos Corrêa/PR

A long queue along the building. The site was catapulted into prominence as a new attraction, which continues to attract visitors (below).



A fleet of flower messengers directed by the artist Makoto Azuma, pedaling across metropolitan São Paulo (above and middle)
©AMKK

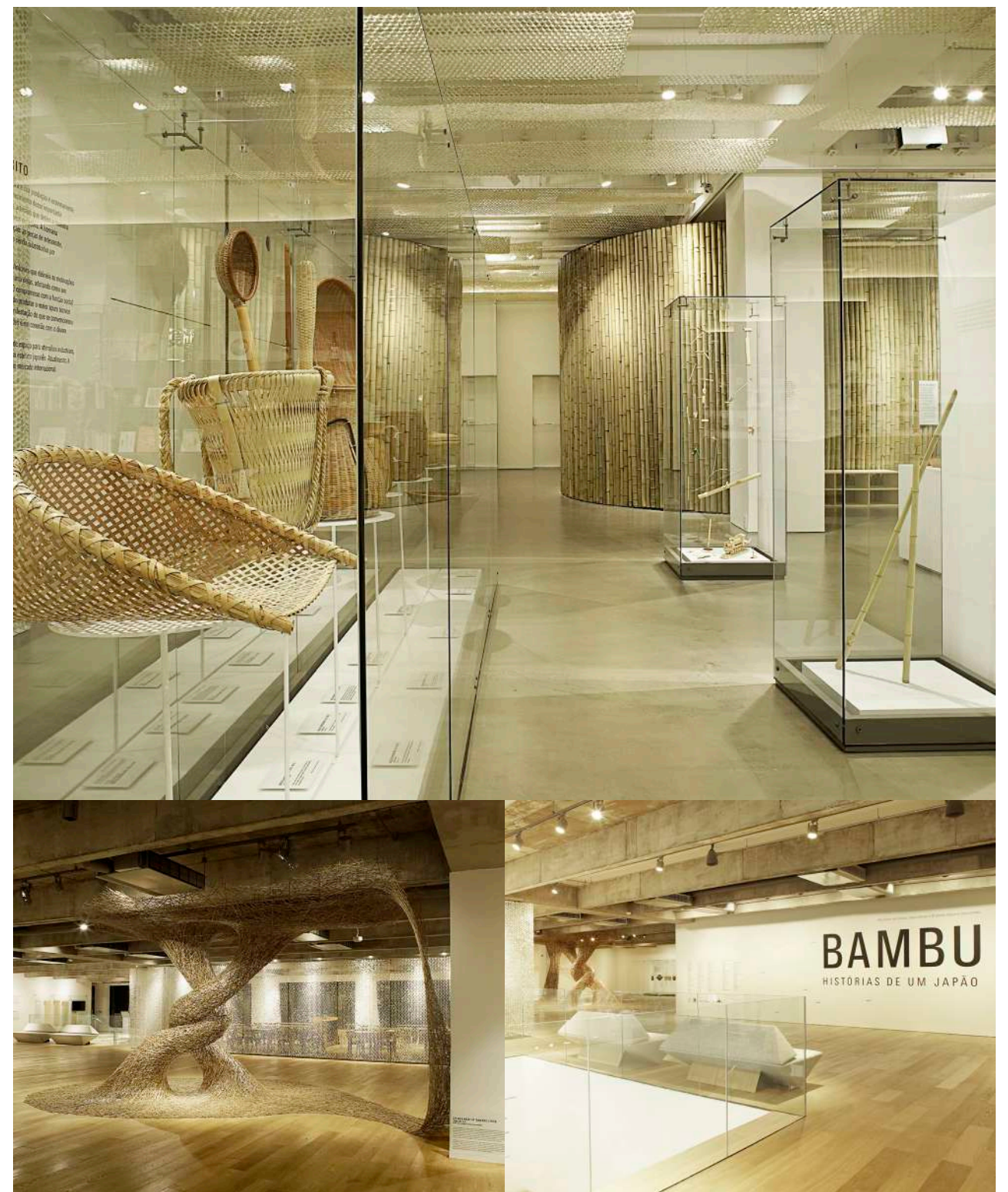
More than 15,000 people were at the outdoor concert featuring Ryuichi Sakamoto and Jun Miyake. The project's collaboration with artists is the best possible channel to deliver its message (below)

JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo Exhibitions

BAMBU —HISTORY OF JAPAN

May 6 – July 9, 2017
Visitors: 190,547

Bamboo is strong and resilient on the one hand, and light-weight and flexible on the other, while also possessing a quality of unobtrusiveness. The inaugural exhibition in São Paulo explored such close subtleties of the characteristics of bamboo and the essence of Japanese culture.



Kengo Kuma ——Eternal Ephemeral	July 18	An exhibition presented by Kengo Kuma who directed the architectural design of JAPAN HOUSE São Paulo. It showcased the essence of his architecture with which he creates groundbreaking designs underpinned by Japanese architectural traditions.
	– Sept. 10, 2017	
	Visitors: 140,509	



ESPUMA ——Kohei Nawa	Sept. 23	Installation by renowned Japanese sculptor Kohei Nawa.
	– Nov. 12, 2017	
	Visitors: 117,513	



Satoyama
—Yoshihiro Narisawa
& Sergio Coimbra

Sept. 19
– Nov. 12, 2017
Visitors: 123,793

Reinterpreting *satoyama* culture (the traditional Japanese concept of living in harmony with nature close to the mountains), chef Narisawa and photographer Sergio Coimbra traveled together for three years, visiting various places of production throughout Japan. The photographs and journal writings produced during their travels vividly present a local diversity across Japan and the evolution of indigenous ingredients.



Oscar Oiwa in Paradise
—Drawing the Ephemeral

Apr. 3
– June 3, 2018
Visitors: 108,958

At the 110th-year commemoration of Japanese immigration to Brazil, Oscar Oiwa, a second-generation Japanese-Brazilian, presented an original installation under the title “Paradise.” He honed his authentic style in Japan and on the contemporary Japanese art scenes. Entering into a 360 ° drawing allowed viewers to experience a unique sensation of being one with the artwork.



MUJI
POP-UP STORE

July 19
– Aug. 15, 2018
Visitors: 139,670

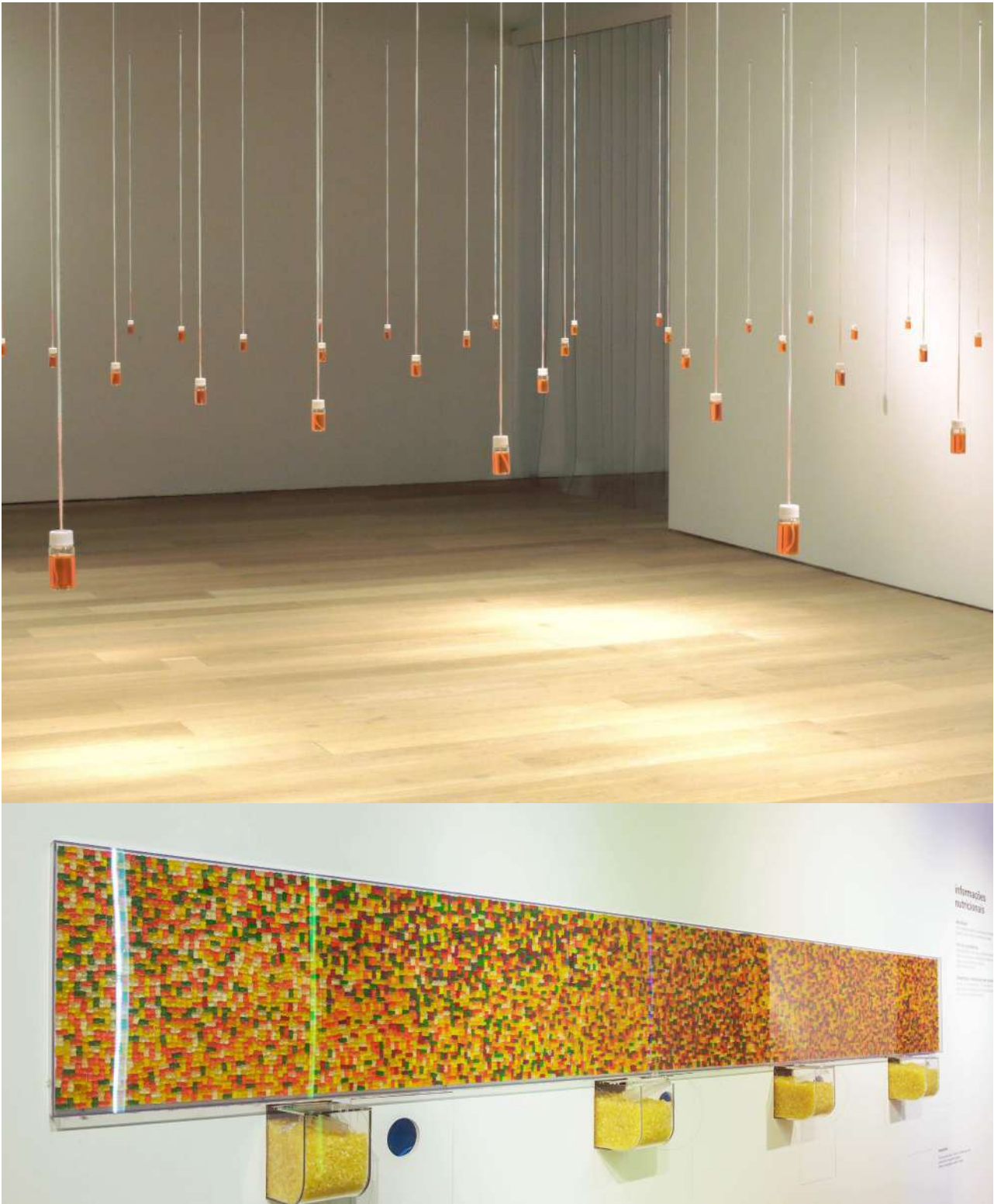
The exhibition highlighted the simple and functional products of MUJI which are highly customizable while maintaining the minimalist aesthetic typical of Japan. It was the first MUJI POP-UP STORE to open in South America.



Aroma & Flavor

July 5
– Oct. 21, 2018
Visitors: 307,939

The exhibition explored different varieties of truly Japanese scents and tastes through interactive experiences.



Dō

—Way of Doing Things—
Aiming for High Virtue

Aug. 21
– Sept. 16, 2018
Visitors: 55,025

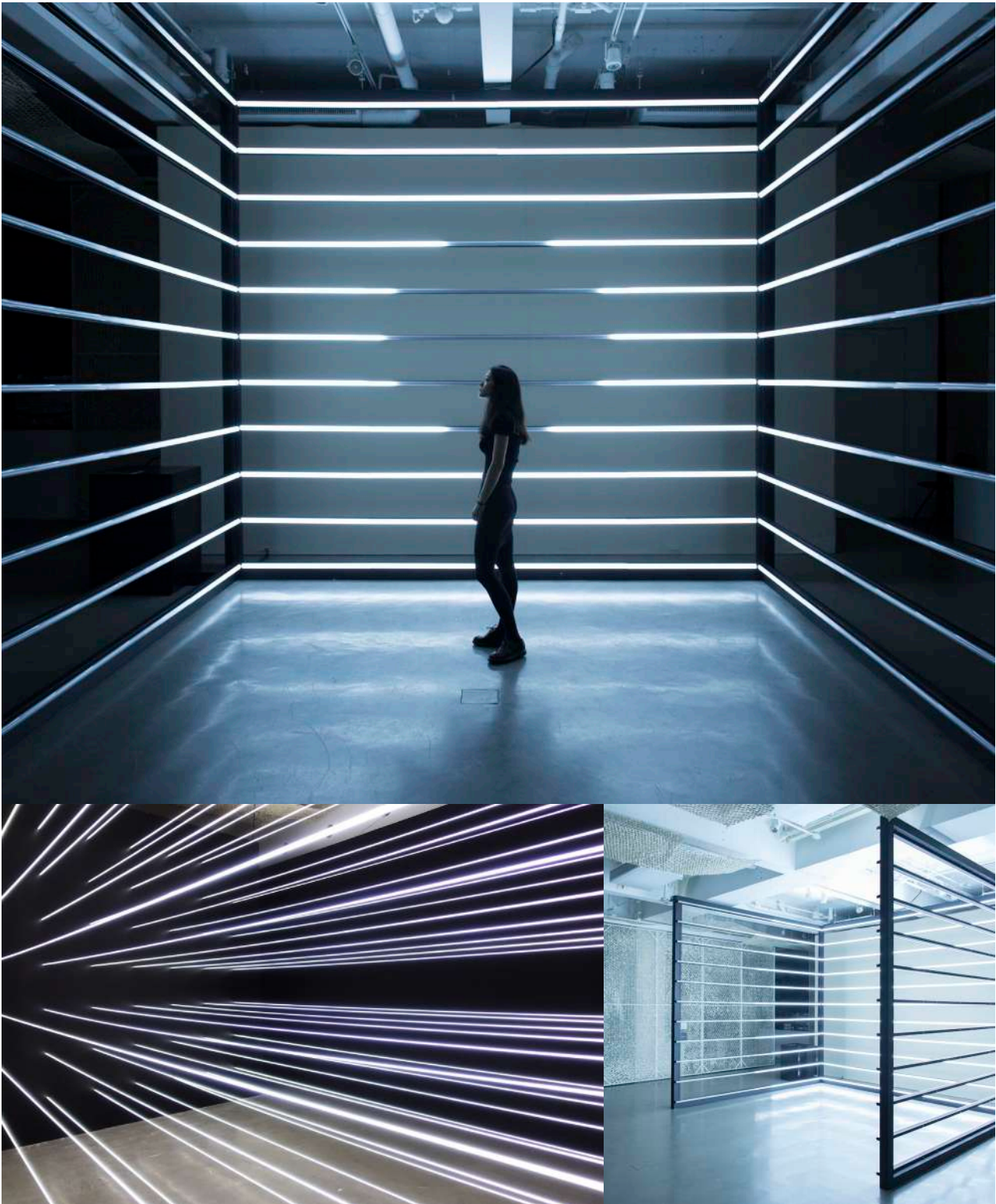
The exhibition introduced the unique essence of the six traditional Japanese *do* (the martial arts Aikido, Kendo, Karate-do, Judo, Sumo, and Kyudo), the mindset of *rei* (respect), and the tough-fibered spirit attained through rigorous training. More than 50 kinds of experiences were offered in collaboration with associations and groups from each *budo* (martial arts) discipline.



NONOTAK
次元 Dimension

Oct. 2, 2018
– Jan. 9, 2019
Visitors: 206,084

A leading and innovative artist duo NONOTAK fuse tradition and a new mode of expression. Their installation was inspired by scenery in Tokyo.



ANREALAGE
A LIGHT UN LIGHT

Nov. 6, 2018
– Jan. 6, 2019
Visitors: 133,977

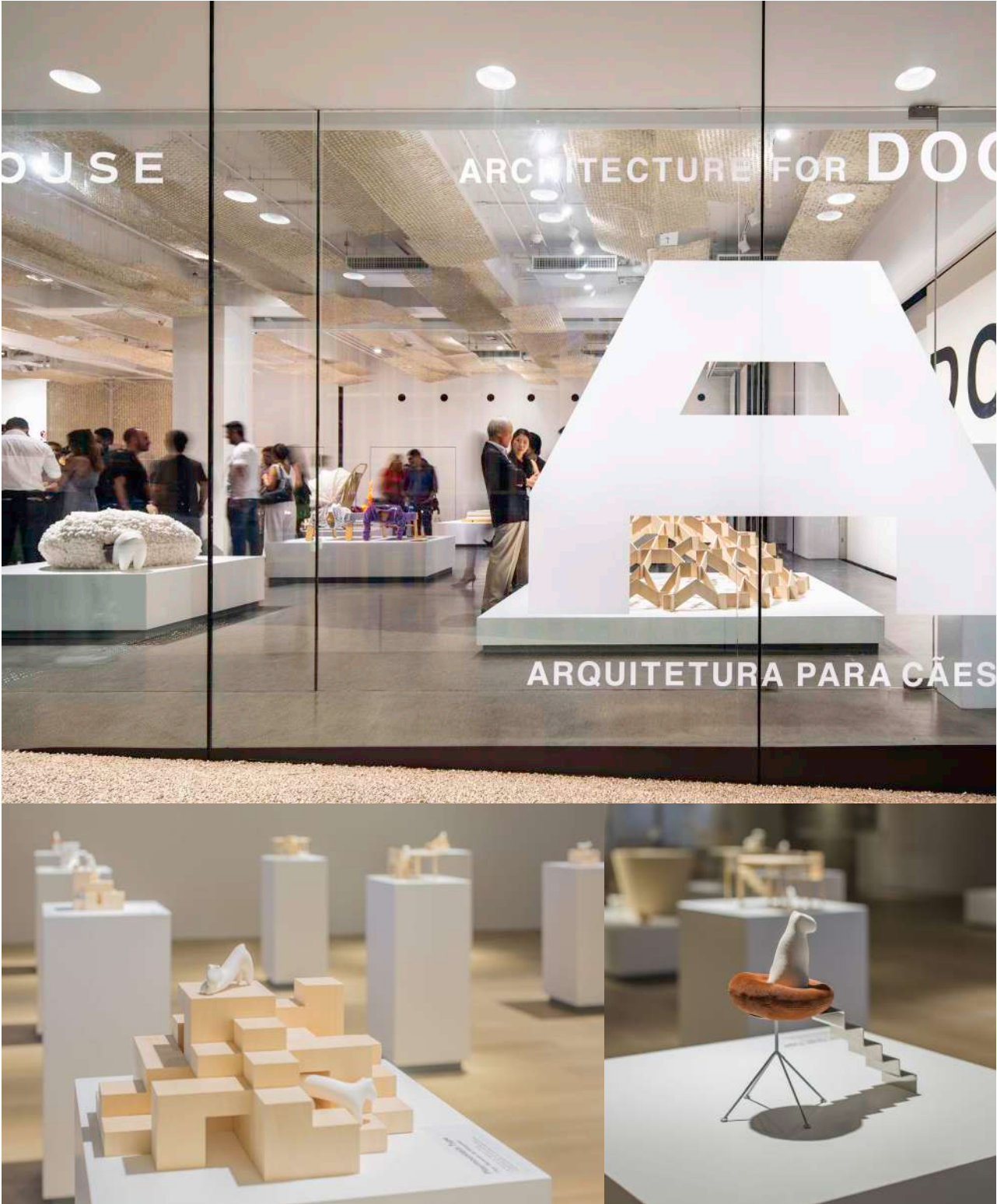
The Fashion label “ANREALAGE” innovates the daily fashion fundamentals. Kunihiko Morinaga’s innovative fusion with non-fashion disciplines represented one of the facets of contemporary Japan. The exhibition was previously hosted in Los Angeles.



Architecture for Dogs

Jan. 19
– Apr. 7, 2019
On display

Efforts to create a new architectural medium for both humans and dogs, man's best friend. World-class architects, many of whom are Japanese, participating in the project created blueprints of their design solutions which were then made available for download.



London

New Discovery of Japan in Kensington

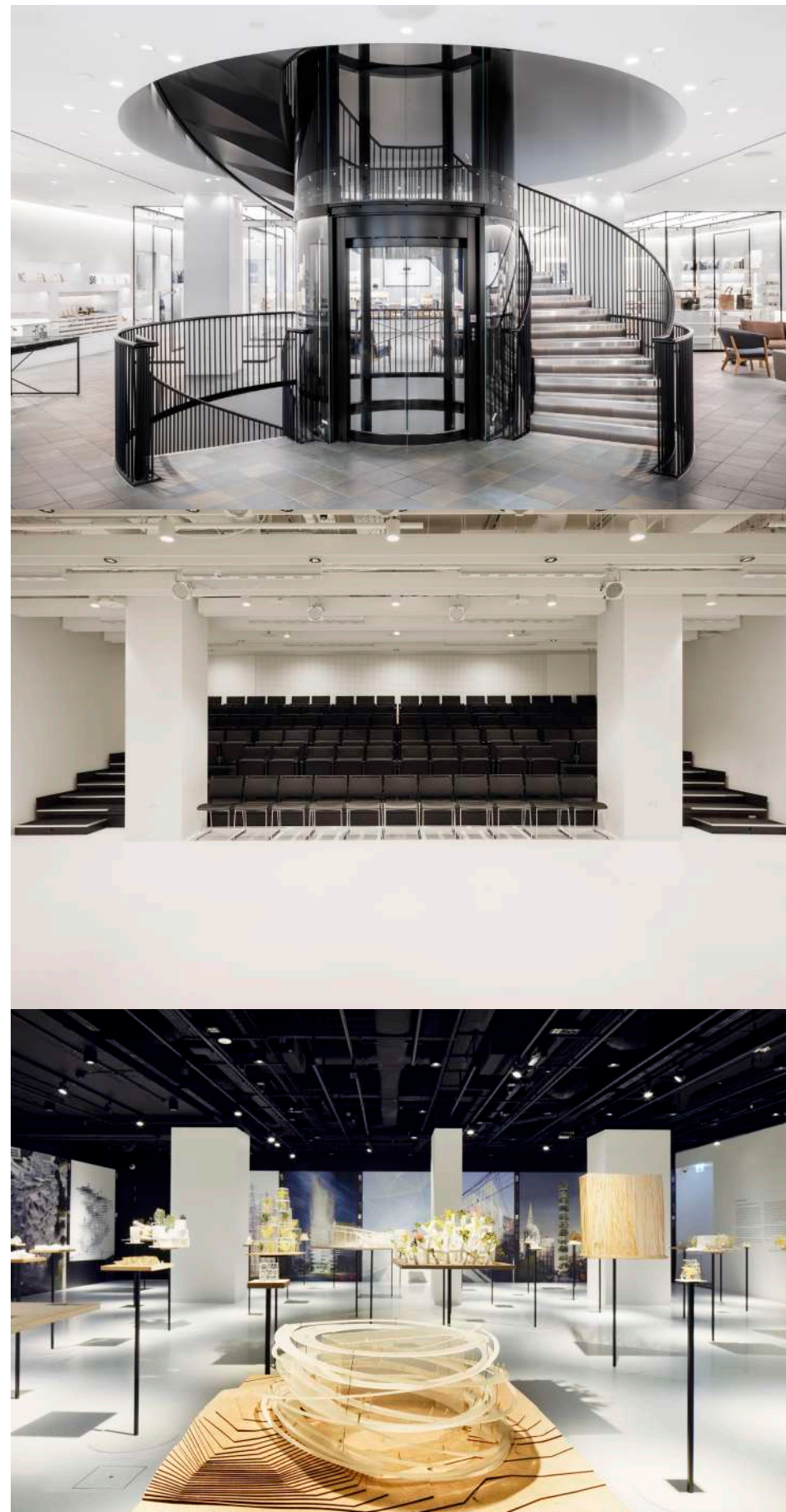
A former department store in a 1930s building on Kensington High Street has reincarnated into a new JAPAN HOUSE with the help of interior designer Masamichi Katayama of Wonderwall Inc. He created an interior closely shaped around the events and other affairs that take place within, elaborately incorporating shop functions and impactful elements such as a restaurant and bar. Here, central to the space is a cylindrical glass lift and a spiral staircase connecting the three floors from the basement through to the second floor. The Shop on the ground floor wards off monotony by providing a glass-partitioned area and rectangular holes in white walls with concave “floating” display shelves. The space illuminates a befitting display of cutting-edge products and traditional craftworks alike.

Retail offers feature products selected with a view to the aesthetic diversity and exquisite finesse the shop wishes to showcase, rather than a collection of items shoppers in London are likely to purchase. High-end, less affordable items are displayed without hesitation. The idea behind this is that an assortment of authentic products, some of which are rarely seen even in Japan, is the best choice for the London hub to inspire visitors to rediscover Japan.

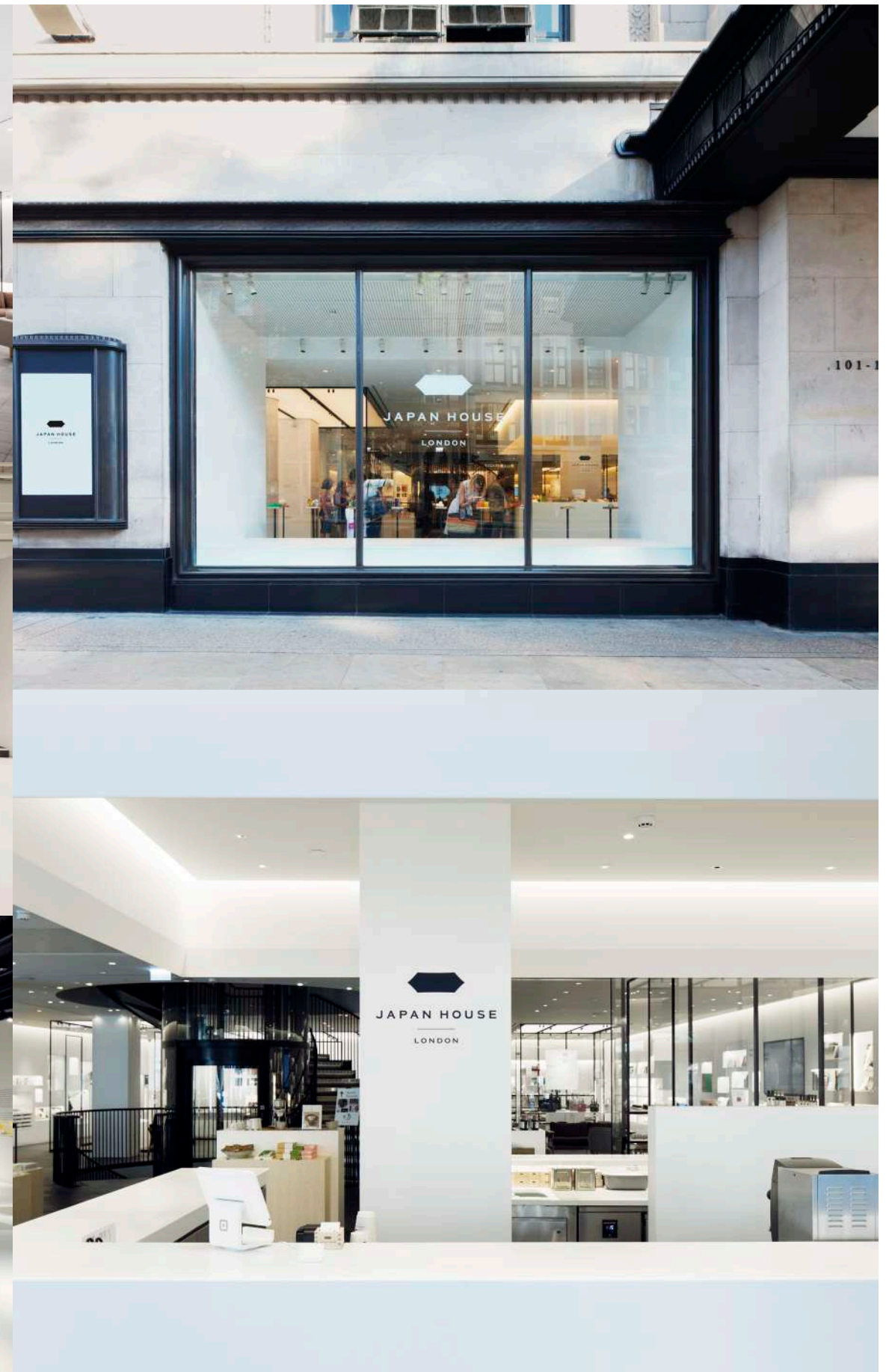
The excellent gallery and the hall also support exhibitions and events. The coffee stand at the entrance serves unsweetened *matcha* latte and other drinks. Visitors are allowed to look around the shop, holding their takeaway drinks. The Japanese restaurant AKIRA on the first floor is based on the “trinity of cooking” principles: relishing food, tableware and space all together. *Omakase* multi-course meals of the chef’s choice, *bento* lunch boxes and original sushi dishes have gained a surging popularity.

Ad posters and digital signage were put up in tube stations while flower messengers directed by Makoto Azuma were deployed on foot carrying decorative baskets to further spread information and awareness of JAPAN HOUSE London.

JAPAN HOUSE London
Director General: Michale Houlihan
Director - Programming: Simon Wright
Director - PR&Communication: Kylie Clark
Director - Corporate Development: Carolyn Burnett



The cylindrical glass lift is the “navel” of the building (above) A hall equipped with retractable seats (middle) Sou Fujimoto’s work presented in the exhibition gallery (below)



View from the window at the entrance side (above)
The coffee stand by the entrance (below)
Bonsai (dwarfed potted tree) and an array of retail items (next page)

Photo: Lee Mawdsley





Each item is allowed to shine in its own designated spot (above)
Items placed in the concaved shelves provide an austere ambience (below)



The Japanese restaurant AKIRA on the first floor (above)
SAKE BAR (middle left) and passage to the Japanese-style room (middle right)
Delicately organized Japanese-style room (lower left) and washbasin (lower right)



Biology Of Metal:
Metal Craftsmanship
In Tsubame-Sanjo

Sept. 6
– Oct. 23, 2018
Visitors: 58,000

The JAPAN HOUSE London was inspired by the highly refined initiative and potential of the Tsubame-Sanjo Factory Festival held in Tsubame-Sanjo area, Niigata Prefecture, Japan. The metalworking culture of this area was presented through displays and demonstrations.

© Tsubame-Sanjo Factory Festival Committee



Product Videos

Shops in the three hubs offer a range of Japanese daily use items. Videos explaining how to use the items are displayed alongside them to facilitate understanding of the products and to attract buyers.



Los Angeles

Changing Hollywood

Among the neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Hollywood receives a large proportion of domestic and foreign tourists. If the target audience of JAPAN HOUSE should also include people who haven't given much thought to Japan, tourists are of strategic importance. In this sense, Hollywood is a place where JAPAN HOUSE can tell its stories to a broader segment of people. Furthermore, the type of ambition exemplified in the goal of raising interest among the people of Los Angeles who might not have come to Hollywood unless JAPAN HOUSE was located there, and convincing them to come to the area specifically to visit the facility, is necessary for the project to thrive in this location.

One of the features of this facility is its objective to showcase the diversity of food culture. Reportedly, there are more than 1,000 Japanese restaurants located in Los Angeles. Rather than adding yet another restaurant, JAPAN HOUSE opts for a collaborative initiative with Japanese food companies and organizations to function as a local food lab. Instead of just contributing to the promotion of *washoku* by operating a restaurant, the focus of JAPAN HOUSE will be on what kind of pilot projects Japanese food companies and organizations could operate from there.

The concept was invented by the JHLA culinary program producer Takeshi Okawara, who is contributing to JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles making use of the experience and know-how he has gained during his 50 year career in the food service industry. By practicing this type of business, the food lab aims to achieve results of the kind that cannot be measured in visitor numbers as well.

The second-floor shop Hollywood & Highland is designed by Kohei Nawa, and the restaurant, salon, and library on the fifth floor by Ryu Kosaka of NOMURA Co., Ltd.

JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles
President: Yuko Kaifu
Art/Creative Director: Tamotsu Yagi
Culinary Program Producer: Takeshi Okawara
Honorary Advisor: Larry Ellison

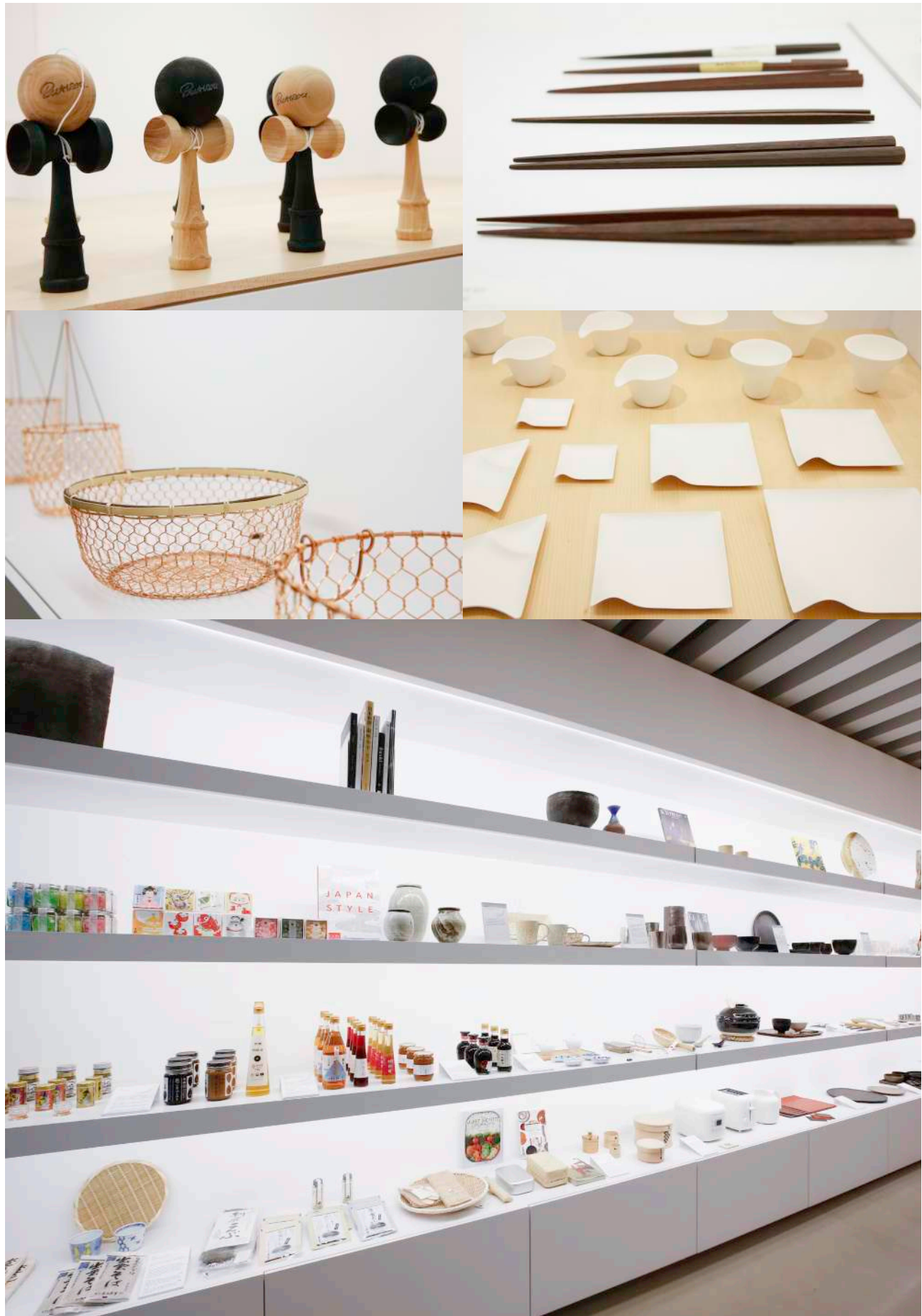


The library is located by the entrance of the restaurant and salon (above).
The restaurant serves as a pilot kitchen for food service projects (middle and below)



Attractive retail space within a few steps from the entrance
An array of innovative concept items: "WASARA,"
"vinyl flower vase," and "air vase" (above)
Entrance of the second-floor shop (below)





The second-floor shop offers carefully curated items including *kendama* (cup-and-ball game), chopsticks, mesh utensils, and paper vases. Food items are on display near the shop entrance.



Kitchen equipped with a set of cooking utensils for *washoku*. Space available for Japanese food companies and organizations to pilot their projects outside Japan (above).

The completed restaurant INN ANN waiting for a display. Under the new slogan “Discover UMAMI,” the food lab is hoping to become a new hidden attraction in Hollywood (below).

ANREALAGE
A LIGHT UN LIGHT

Jan. 19
– Mar. 21, 2018
Visitors: 6,030

The Fashion label “ANREALAGE” innovates the daily fashion fundamentals. Kunihiko Morinaga’s innovative fusion with non-fashion disciplines represents one of the facets of contemporary Japan.



Satoyama
—Yoshihiro Narisawa
& Sergio Coimbra

June 21
– July 29, 2018
Visitors: 20,124

Reinterpreting *satoyama* culture (the traditional Japanese concept of living in harmony with nature close to the mountains), chef Narisawa and photographer Sergio Coimbra traveled together for three years, visiting various places of production throughout Japan. The exhibition was also held at Union Station.



Opportunities to Discover Japan Together

Kenya Hara | Chief Creative Director of JAPAN HOUSE

The transmission of information, the flow of people, financial systems, and logistics are increasingly globalized, and worldwide mobility is accelerating. Movement permeates our lives, and it has become common practice to consider a global perspective when making decisions. Conversely, as globalism matures, the value of locality is also experiencing relative growth. For the very essence of culture is embedded in the locality from which it derives. Characteristics nurtured in a particular locality are the very resources or assets underlying global diversity and richness. Thus, the more knowledgeable and active we become on the global level, the more conscious we become of the value of locality. In this sense, we have entered an age where “global” and “local” are no longer conflicting ideas, but an inseparable concept of paired opposites.

Having existed as an undivided country more than a thousand years, Japan has nurtured a unique culture. Geographically, it is an isolated island located off the eastern coast of the Eurasian Continent, which has also helped form its one-of-a-kind culture. This extensive cultural heritage is an invaluable resource for the future. The country needs to establish its presence as a nation with a new driving force inherited from those rich cultural assets, in view of the future industrial paradigm to succeed the current manufactural industrial society.

The international community is giving rise to new frictions as the earth grows small. In an international context, Japan must advocate contributions to solving future problems and to peace in a meaningful and rational manner. As many people are aware, however, one cannot earn the empathy or support of the international community simply by repeating the same assertions. Japan is historically known for its strong economy underpinned by the successful post-war industrial transformation. This may conceivably have led to pay lesser attention to making itself known as cultural assets with a unique aesthetic and culture capable of enriching the world.

We should no longer rely on the technique of presenting culture in a superficial and stereotypical manner, in an attempt to raise interest by appealing to exoticism. Some of the typical approaches to surprise and intrigue audiences, if I dare mention them at the risk of being misunderstood, include serving sushi, or *matcha* green tea under a traditional red umbrella, wearing *kimono* or *happi* costume, the occasional sounding of Japanese drums, and the folding of *origami* figures. We would rather explore the aesthetic essence underlying and nurturing Japanese culture. Unquestionably, sushi, tea ceremonies, *matsuri* festivals, Japanese drums, and *origami* constitute essential elements of the Japanese culture.

However, more efforts should be bestowed upon the presentation of the concepts and aesthetics inherent in the culture. Tempting people with simplistic exoticism does not promote deep empathy and interest in Japan, or a feeling of respect for the country.

Japanese people are intrigued by what is lonesome or solitary, and finding balance in what is disproportionate or irregular. Less interested in the state of completion and abundance, they see emptiness as having the possibility of being filled. They are acutely aware of the transient and ephemeral nature of emotions. What do the Japanese feel is beautiful? What do they value in life? Just like *washoku* and a tea ceremony, the cutting-edge Japanese technology, *anime*, and contemporary art are all inspired by the same sense of values.

Pilots around the world say that the night view over Tokyo and Yokohama is the most beautiful on earth. The individual lights spreading across the surface, shining steadily without going out or flickering, bear witness to the amazing depth of the world's largest metropolitan area. Limpid air particular to an insular country may be another factor contributing to this panoramic view. Roads and public squares on the Marunouchi side of Tokyo Station have perfectly designed differences in levels and drainage slopes for rainwater. Such meticulous engineering of road surfaces is quite possibly unique to Japan. Restrooms in Japan's international airports are exceptionally immaculate and clean compared to those in any other cities in the world, and it is the designers, cleaning service staff, and users who make this possible.

Precision, politeness, subtlety, and simplicity. The Japanese people possess these aesthetic principles. Business people and service providers as well as the recipients of their services mutually understand the implicit principles that guide their behaviors. In all likelihood, Japan's industrial production, *monozukuri* (craftsmanship), services, and hospitality are all propelled by the same virtues. If we can convey these fundamental principles that have developed as a "sensational operating system" over a long time, Japan will far deeply be understood.

During these four years I worked as the project's Chief Creative Director, I kept exploring if the above-mentioned perception of the Japanese aesthetic would be able to generate empathy and support. At the same time, I was facing the challenging question of how the three JAPAN HOUSE hubs ought to embody this aesthetic. It is quite demanding to maintain the level of

quality under circumstances involving so many different positions and opinions of stakeholders, and various fields of specialties. So, my stringent creative direction may at times have been a cause of disconcert for members of the project.

Nevertheless, in the course of expressing the multifaceted aspects of Japan with precision, politeness, subtlety, and simplicity, I was able to elicit a rewarding response in people by making them realize of "how little they actually knew about Japan", and thus awakening their interest in the country.

All three hubs have received far more visitors than expected, and continue to attract people as a well-known and popular facility among locals. This achievement is a testament to how appropriate management and presentation of unique culture can favorably be accepted in global contexts.

While the opening of the three hubs puts an end to the prologue of the project's story, the next stage is where the crucial work begins. It is also the time now for the facilities to gain recognition in Japan. The next chapter calls for more elaborate and earnest management in terms of the attitude toward facility operations, curation of retail products and exhibitions, quality improvement of food services, and so on. Passing on the Japanese culture entails fine-tuned and step-by-step efforts, which require the discerning connoisseurs and palates who appreciate the objects and experiences offered. It is also essential to involve talented and motivated people and to obtain the cooperation of prudent, thoughtful supporters.

Japanese culture is a profound resource beyond the boundaries of any one person's imagination. Once again, I call for the unceasing efforts of every member of the project, so that he or she is never satisfied with his or her knowledge and experience, and strive to keep asking themselves questions about Japan in order to learn more.

This report wraps up the principles underlying JAPAN HOUSE and its step-by-step achievements since the opening of the facilities. I hope this record will serve as a guideline for future development of the JAPAN HOUSE facilities.



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